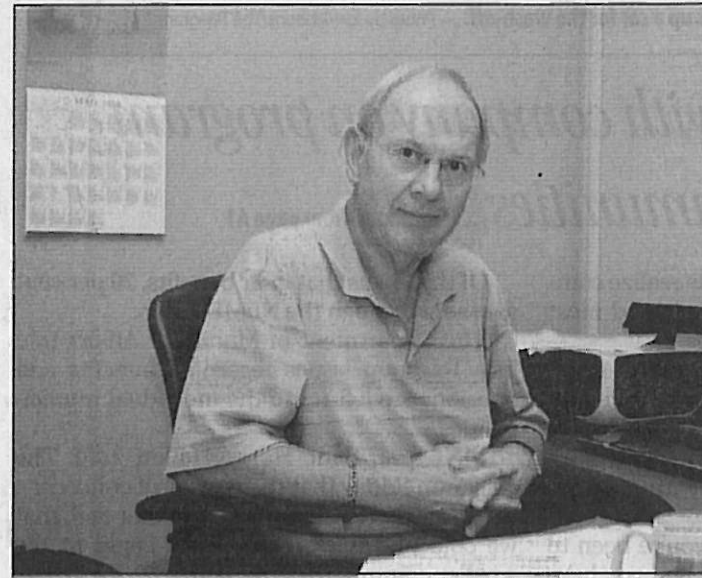


Senior municipal staff may be hard to replace

Lack of benefits, pension plans blamed

By **DAVE BARTLETT**

THE TELEGRAM



Terry Taylor is the general manager of Trio Life, Health and Pension in St. John's. — Photo by Gary Hebbard/The Telegram

Smaller, rural towns in this province may be facing a labour crunch as many senior municipal officials are approaching retirement age.

The problem, according to Terry Taylor, has to do with the fact that most municipalities in the province don't offer full benefits to their staff.

Taylor is the general manager of Trio, which oversees the Newfoundland and Labrador Municipal Employees Benefits (NLMEB) plan.

He told The Telegram this week that a survey conducted by Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador (MNL) a few years ago showed some worrying statistics.

There are about 280 municipalities in the province, but only about 40 per cent of

them offer health benefits to their employees.

Only 20 per cent of communities offer employee pension plans.

The survey also noted that 50 per cent of towns in the province are going to have vacancies at the senior staff level by 2015.

Taylor said historically it wasn't as important for towns to have employee benefits, partially because people were just happy to have the jobs.

But as senior staff retire in these towns — town clerks, town managers and engineers, for example — replacing them could prove to be a challenge.

"I think as that becomes a more prevalent situation across the province, the towns are going to have a hard time attracting qualified people to work there, if they don't offer them an attractive compensation package," said Taylor.

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